

Operational Plan – Vehicle Removal Team

Coutts/Milk River Protest

February 24 – 28, 2022

Situation

Protest in the Coutts/Milk River area, Alberta. As of 2022/02/24, the protesters vehicles/equipment remain off the roadway. The Vehicle Removal Team of 4 members plus 1 support member (ORT), will remain in place should the need arise to remove vehicles from the roadway who may wish to re-start a blockade. All 3 seized assets (Tractor, Semi, Gravel Truck) have been secured at ATR Towing in Airdrie; ATR can hold for an indefinite period and storage rates have been determined.

Mission

Remain in a state of readiness for the purpose of safely removing any movable assets that may block roadways.

Execution

Vehicle Removal and Relocation to Temporary Drop Zone

The Vehicle Removal Team is to be used for tactical towing operations where the scene is too dangerous to involve civilian towing companies or operators. If there is low to no risk to civilians, a civilian tow company should be used. The decision to place civilian tow operators into a zone will be made by the Vehicle Removal Team Bronze Commander.

Tactical vehicle removal will be conducted by Regular Members (RM) in two-person teams who will drive or tow vehicles from the roadway site to an alternate, safe location (see Appendix A). At least one RM in the two-person team will hold a Class 1 operator's licence and will operate equipment while the other RM provides over watch.

As of 2022/02/24, resources will consist of 4 RMs, each of whom will hold a subsisting Class 1 or Class 3 operator's license. These resources will be split into two teams of two members. Current scheduling is as follows:

- Wednesday, February 23, 2022 – travel to Lethbridge
- Thursday, February 24, 2022 – crossover training with the current team
- Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday (February 25, 26, 27, 28)
 - 2 teams of 2 members working 10:00 – 22:00 hours **(updated)**
 - 1 member on ORT support vehicle 10:00 hrs to 22:00 hrs **(updated)**
- Tuesday, March 1, 2022 – return travel.

Each day, one team of two members may be placed on Operational Readiness in the event tactical towing is required after hours between the hours of 22:00 – 10:00 hours **(updated)**.

At this point in time, there is no plans to mobilize additional VRT members beyond March 1st.

Two options have been planned for the execution of this objective based on a risk assessment as to the level of potential violence and danger of the situation. Two options for conveying the equipment include

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driving all vehicles that can be safely driven out of the site and towing the remainder of the vehicles that cannot be driven.

Driving vehicles out of sites

Driving as many vehicles out as possible is more advantageous to towing as it is not only likely to be timelier but should mitigate the risk of damage to the vehicles. Resources for this will include:

- RMs with Class 1 licenses who can operate vehicles, including commercial tractor/trailer vehicles and farm implements;
- RMs with knowledge and experience operating equipment and farm implements; and/or
- RMs with Class 3 licenses who can operate vehicles with up to three axles.

Towing the vehicles out of the sites

Towing vehicles is less advantageous than driving them for a number of reasons, including the length of time it will take to tow each vehicle, risk of damage to the machinery being towed, the risk of injury to the tow operators, and risk of damage to the tow vehicles. Qualified civilian tow operators have been secured for this task.

Tactical Towing (High Risk Assessment; Police Officer Teams Only)

The objective of the dynamic strategy is to safely move any vehicles and equipment from Highway 4 to secure those items for safekeeping at a location where they can be held until they can be towed to an impound lot by a civilian towing company. The removal of the vehicles and equipment is intended to be as efficient and safe as possible while recognizing that the risk remains high. Vehicles will be removed from the area as directed by the requesting team.

It is desirable to have the arrest teams search individuals to determine their identities and if they are in possession of keys for vehicles when they are arrested. If keys are located, they should be seized and placed in an exhibit bag with the name of the subject arrested and the vehicle identified (if the subject is willing to provide the details) to allow for its safest and most efficient removal. Arrest team members are encouraged to notify anyone arrested that members of the RCMP will be responsible for the movement and storage of their vehicles and equipment and that keys will assist in ensuring that the least amount of action is required to remove the vehicle and equipment which will minimize the potential for damage.

Kit and Clothing

Each operator team will be in RCMP Service Order #1 uniform with all intervention options available and will wear soft and hard body armour. Cover members will be responsible for the security and safety of the operator and will not engage in any physical confrontation away from their operator while in the controlled area. Cover is also responsible for monitoring the movement of other vehicles and equipment to ensure the safety of the operator. The operator and cover will transport the vehicle/equipment to the drop zone location identified below.

Security at Removal Site

General Duty members will provide security of the towed vehicles at the drop zone. Vehicles that cannot be moved or removed will be rendered inoperable by locking/securing and disconnecting/cutting the battery cables.

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The dynamic equipment removal process will continue, and be continually re-assessed, until such time as the general location is deemed safe by the applicable Commander.

Arrival at Drop Zone

The General Duty members providing security will photograph the vehicles inside and out, and will complete a tow form. The General Duty members providing security will then call the applicable commercial tow companies noted below to remove the vehicles and take them back to the impound lot of the company.

End of Dynamic Strategy

At the conclusion of the dynamic strategy, all team members will meet as a group at the drop zone to debrief and assess the actions taken to that point. Consideration will be given to the need for food, water, rest, etc. After the assessment is complete, the team may transition to the controlled process.

Controlled (Lower Risk Assessment; Civilian Tow Operators Permitted)

If the vehicle removal request is not of a high risk nature, members are encouraged to contact a civilian tow company for removal of the *vehicle*. *Requesting members should take photographs of the vehicle and complete a tow form.*

Route

Appendix A depicts various options for routes that can be taken, depending on the location of the vehicle and any potentially blocked routes. Routes have been designed as a circuit to mitigate the risk of incoming and outgoing vehicles do not meet each other on the same road and potential for resulting damage to the vehicles. Further, the route departing the drop zone has been designed to ensure vehicles only need to make right hand turns, making it easier for heavy equipment operators.

Human resource requirement

- 4 RMs to operate vehicles and equipment of which 1 will be the NCO i/c of the team.
- 1 ORT tool truck and operator (optional).

Vehicle Storage and Security

Drop Zone

Permission has been granted by Alberta Transportation to use a Government of Alberta-owned gravel pit located approximately 8 km west of Milk River as a temporary vehicle storage site (drop zone). The site an 80-acre parcel of land contains a large gravel area that can fit a significant number of vehicles. The land is fenced with barbed wire fencing on the south and west sides. The north and east sides are unfenced. There are large hills on the west, north, and part of the east side of the gravel pit area, creating a natural barrier that would prohibit many vehicles from being able to drive out of the site.

Location

- Township Road 24A at the intersection of Range Road 171, on the east side of Range Road 171.
- Latitude: 49.150308, Longitude: -112.162566.

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Appendix A outlines the site and an option for securing it using RMs in its partial fenced state. Four LED diesel powered light standards have been secured from AEMA provincial stockpile in Aldersyde, AB and should provide sufficient lighting of the site, if needed. The light standards are currently secured in the same Government of Alberta lot as the towing equipment (addresses noted below) – **Update – the light standards have all been returned to the Provincial Stockpile as of the week of February 21, 2022.**

Civilian Towing and Long Term Storage

The following companies have agreed to provide towing services for the RCMP that are not of a high risk nature and will attend to pick up vehicles from the drop zone that were initially towed by the Vehicle Recovery Team.

- Personal Info.

- Personal Info.

Long Term Storage of Seized Equipment

As of 2022/02/21, ATR Towing located at 125 East Lake Blvd NE in Airdrie, AB has agreed to store seized assets at a cost of \$90/day per vehicle (\$270/day for all 3 vehicles which works out to \$8100 per month for all 3 vehicles). Owner/Manager is Personal Info. Note: MCU and DEOC has been advised of location and rates of the seized assets. Steve requires notification should more assets be inbound to his lot.

Human resource requirements

As of 2022/02/21, there will no longer be drop zone resources. Should vehicles be moved to the drop zone, General Duty resources will be needed to secure the vehicle(s) until a civilian towing company can attend to take them to the impound lot. Should demand exceed general duty resource requirements, consideration could be given to re-starting dedicated site security resources.

Administration

Tracking

- Costs
- Equipment
- Assets

Equipment

- 2 x heavy wreckers
- 2 x medium tow trucks
- 2 x light tow trucks
- Komatsu 61PX dozer,
- 16ft low boy flat deck trailer
- Western Star Tri Drive 2008
- Peterbilt 2006 Tandem Axle Winch

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- Tridem axle trailer
- Case 621B loader with bucket
- 4 LED diesel powered light standards (172,200 Lumens, 6,000-watt output)
 - No cost (Government of Alberta Provincial Emergency Stockpile);
 - If stolen or damaged, RCMP would be responsible for the cost of replacement or repair;
 - Expectation that the equipment will be refueled prior to return.
 - Return location:
 - Personal Info. [REDACTED], AB
 - Contact: Personal Info. [REDACTED] (cell) or Personal Info. [REDACTED] (office) – Personal Info. [REDACTED]@gmail.com
 - Update – These lights have been returned to the Provincial stock pile on week of 2022/02/21.

City of Edmonton and City of Calgary Tow Trucks have been returned to their home units on or near 2022/02/20 and are no longer part of the asset list / VRT.

All GoA equipment is to be stored at the following location when not deployed to Coutts:

- Personal Info. [REDACTED]
- The gate PIN number is Pers [REDACTED] (key pad on right of the 2 key pads)
- Contact: Personal Info. [REDACTED] (cell)

Command/Control/Communication

Silver Commander

Vehicle Recovery Team Bronze Commander

The Vehicle Recovery Team Bronze Commander will assume command and oversight of the Vehicle Recovery Team and operations. Members assigned to the Vehicle Recovery Team will communicate all inquiries to the Vehicle Removal Team Bronze Commander. The Bronze Commander will either make a decision, if it is of a tactical nature, or communicate with the Silver Commander for inquiries of a strategic nature.

All communications during Vehicle Recovery Team will be done on the Milk River talk group.

Future Deployments / Operations

It has been recommended to DEOC to maintain a list of members that served on the VRT Team including phone numbers and their current geographical location – this list would be most beneficial in the urgent engagement of trained VRT members should future road blockages arise.

Updated: 2022/02/24

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